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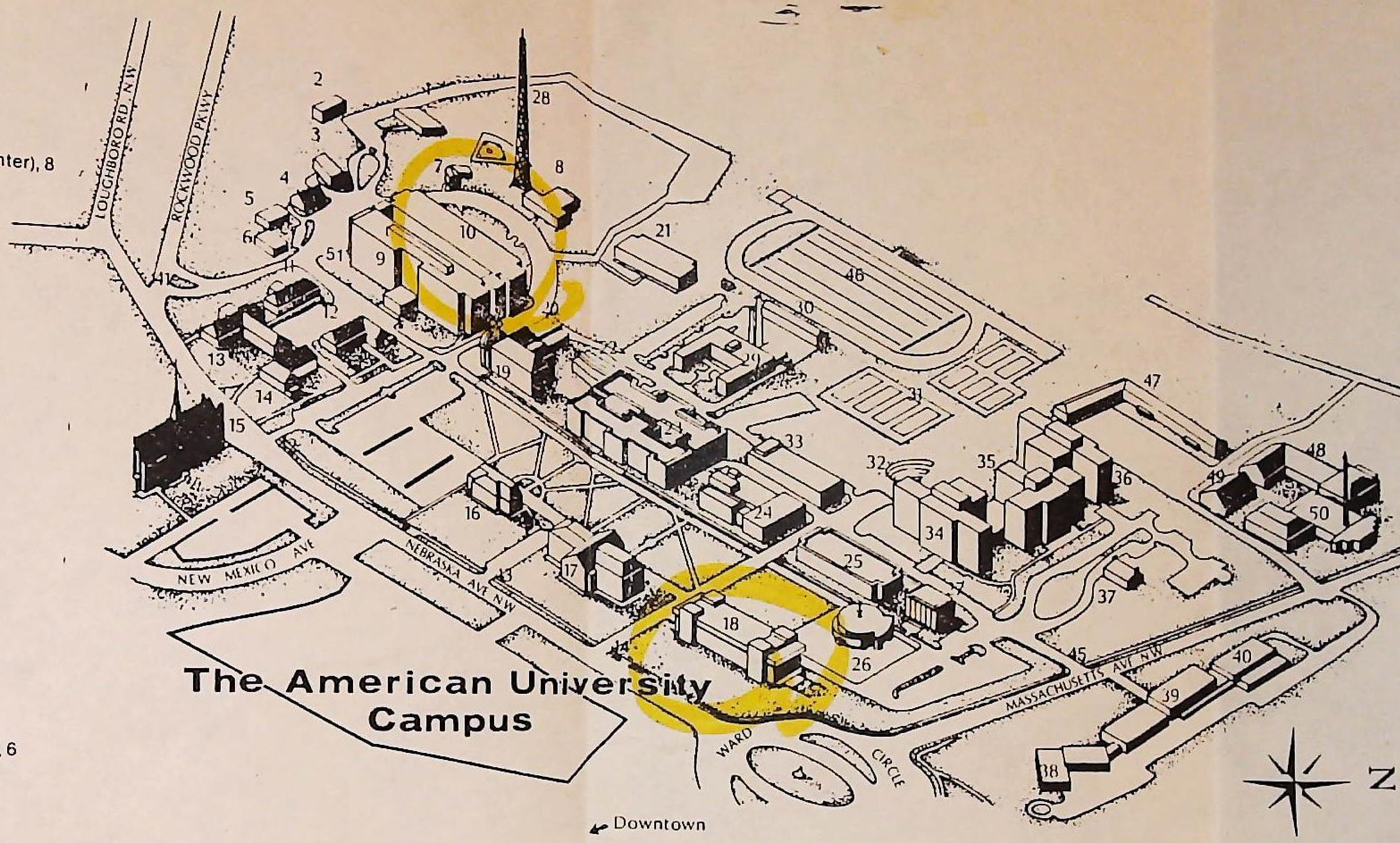
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Survival of the fit, not strong

Sydney
Harris

News Group Chicago

Strictly personal

When people use the phrase "survival of the fittest," do they know what they are talking about? In most cases, no. The phrase has become perverted into a slogan to justify the use of force or cunning or greed in the competition for material goods.

What is the fittest? It is not the largest, the strongest, or the smartest. The two species that have lived longer on Earth and have survived, while strong and the cunning have gone under. As Charles Fort has pointed out, "There is no way of determining 'fitness' except in that a thing does survive."

So, 'fitness,' then, is only another name for 'survival;' and Darwinism is the theory that survivors survive. This is about as useful as knowing that older people are those who live longer and beautiful people are those who we find most attractive.

If any event, survival of the fittest cannot legitimately be transferred from the species to the individual. The aim of every organism is to reproduce itself as much as possible, and not merely to live as well as it can. Bees and ants sacrifice themselves for the community; they do not plunder or exploit it for individual well-being.

As social animals, we have been designed more like bees or ants than like cockroaches or rats. Individually we can do little; collectively, we can accomplish a great deal — enough to allow us to determine our own fate, to change the course of biological evolution itself. Other creatures have natures; only man has a history.

Life on Earth is by no means a simple matter of dominance and submission: if it were, the strongest species would now be in control, while the weakest would be enslaved or exterminated. Survival instead has been largely based on the ability to adapt to changing conditions — and such adaption has little to do with strength, force, or guile.

Different species demonstrate their fitness by surviving for different reasons; there is no one particular trait that assures perpetuation of a species. Each must learn, by trial and error, the best way to adapt to an ice age or a dwindling food supply or a new kind of predator. Extinction is certain only when the creature persists in the same old habits.

We are just beginning to learn that our same old habits, like the exploitation of nonrenewable resources, may make us at one with the auk and the dodo; and we have scarcely begun to learn that if we change our environment too drastically — through hydrogen bombs or their equivalent — there will be no fit, fitter, or fittest among us to survive. Our force, our cunning, and our greed may leave only the rat and the roach to inherit the Earth.

Kennebec Journal / Augusta / Maine 7 Jan 1985 p 3
Monday

Doonesbury

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SATURDAY, AUGUST 10, 1974

UFOs And the Followers Of Fort

By Emily Fisher

Charles Fort, solemn, gray and bespectacled, peers from a huge poster portrait pasted on the lectern. Programs distributed at the door describe him: "The man who invented the UFO question in 1919 and dealt with unknown aerial phenomena decades before the flying saucer was heard of." The association opening its second annual convention at the Shoreham Americana yesterday has taken his name, The International Fortean Organization.

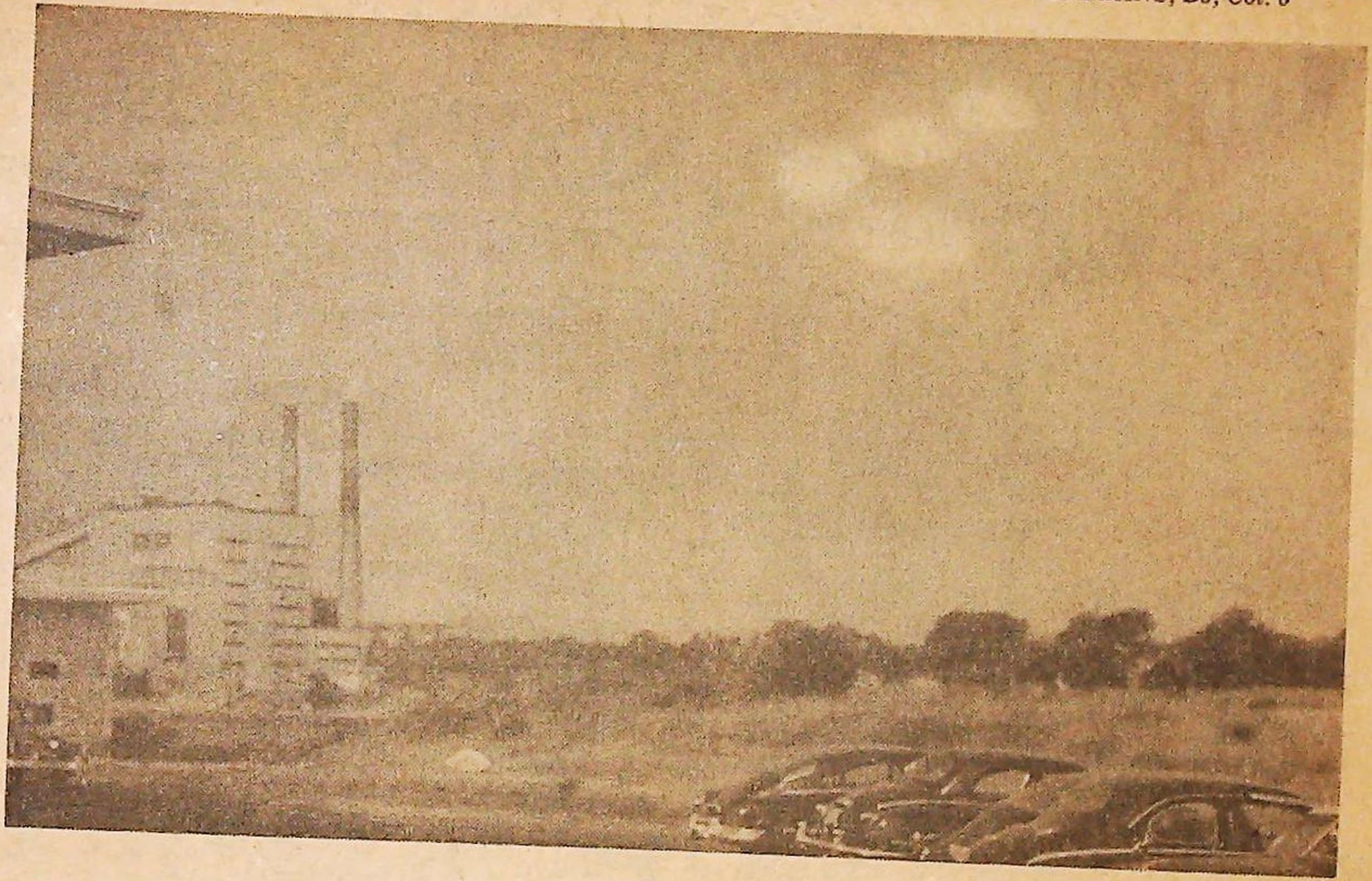
"The ESP Reader," "Magic Into Science," "In the Wake of the Sea Serpents," "Human Animals," "Sex Songs of the Ancient Latts," "True Irish Ghost Stories"—those are a few of the hundreds of books lining the walls at the back of the convention hall, bespeaking the Forteans' investigative business: "UFOs, sea monsters, ghosts, lights on brown mountains, abominable snowmen, the Loch Ness Monster. We are interested in everything the public ignores as real because it can't rationally account for it," says Margaret Moam, associate editor of the Psychic Observer.

The Fortean organization, founded in 1965 and boasting about 1,500 members—scientists, several Catholic priests, housewives, even Nobel Prize-winner Linus Pauling—explores what established science ignores. They see themselves not as spiritualists, but as "skeptics of established science," says Ron Willis, the convention's organizer.

Empiricists all, they study what modern science scoffs at as supersti-

See FORTEANS, B3, Col. 6

Charles Fort, above, "the man who invented the UFO question" and for whom the Fortean Organization is named. Right, four unidentified flying objects photographed by a Coast Guard photographer over Salem, Mass. on July 16, 1952.



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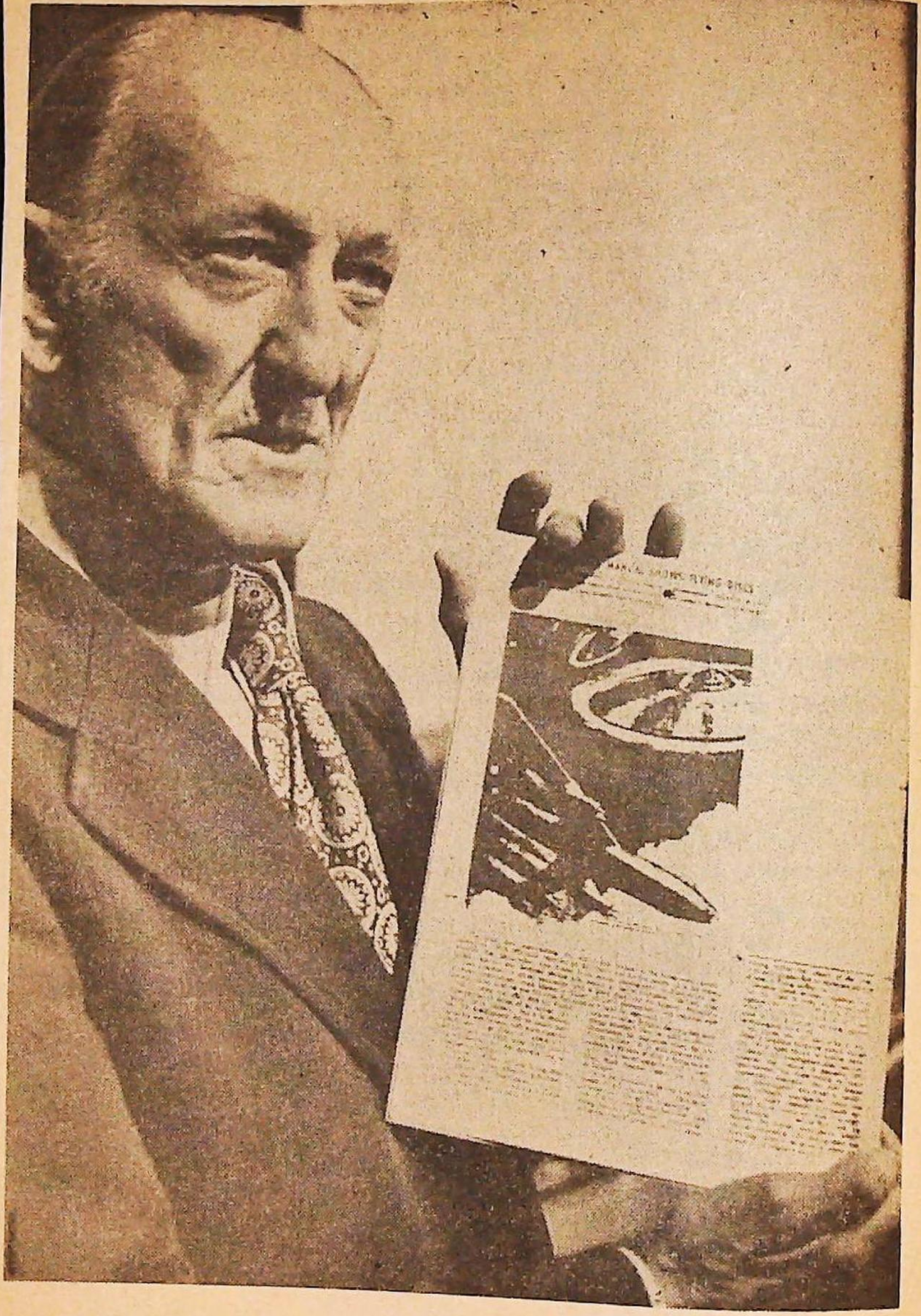

Photos by Harry Naltchayan—The Washington Post

Donald Keyhoe, author of "The Flying Saucers Are Real": "I can't keep what I've discovered about the UFO's secret any more . . . people should know."

UFOs and The Forteans

FORTEANS, From B1

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"I studied it! Why, I talked to all the official sources. I saw the Pentagon papers," says Keyhoe, pulling at the knobs on his hands and growing pink in the face.

"This UFO cover-up beats Watergate's then," observed Robert Sheaffer, another member.

"Yeah. How come it only took them two years to uncover Watergate and this UFO thing is 25 years old?" Klass bores his finger into Keyhoe's chest.

"That's just politics," replies Keyhoe.

The society has not been persecuted so much as ignored, members say. "It's an underground thing," says Moam. "It's a very strange group," interjects Willis. "They're much more open minded than most people," says Moam. She continues, "Like me, I believe in anything." Moam's astrology charts predicted that her friends would be far from ordinary. "We're all crazy together," she says.

The Forteans do endure, they say with much laughter. "But we usually find that we're five years ahead of mainstream science," says Willis. "Like the Drifting Continent Theory that was poo-pooed in 1912, we championed it and now it's acceptable theory."

"Or like Fort's investigation of visible phenomena on the moon," Willis continues. 'Well. they thought the moon was dead then, and they laughed at him. And today, of course, we know for a fact that strange things are happening on the moon." Fort also, says the program, studied anomalous lights in the sky, correlations between earthquakes "and other phenomena." To commemorate the centenary of his birth, the convention calls itself "FORTFEST '74."

Meeting here for three days, it will cover such subjects as "Bigfoot," "Monsters," "Pre-Columbian Contacts between the Americas, Europe and Asia," "Spacemen," "Self-Deceptions in the Name of Science" — all in tribute to Fort, the man the program calls "a champion of the freedom of the human mind."

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"Our data is just as good as theirs (established scientists), like ice chunks dropping out of the sky," adds another nearby Fortean.

"And of course you've seen spiritualists' photography," chimes another.

"And of course you know that science has no evidence whatsoever for the theory of evolution," says Mark Anthony, 18, and a junior at Ball State University in Muncie, Ind. "The point is that truth is *not* relative to each new discovery as it is in modern science." He goes on, sliding his glasses up and down his nose: "My future?" he shrugs. "Oh, the world is modifying itself too rapidly for me to hypothesize."

Moam hugs herself as she too shrugs: "All of us who believe in fairies think it's all just wonderful."

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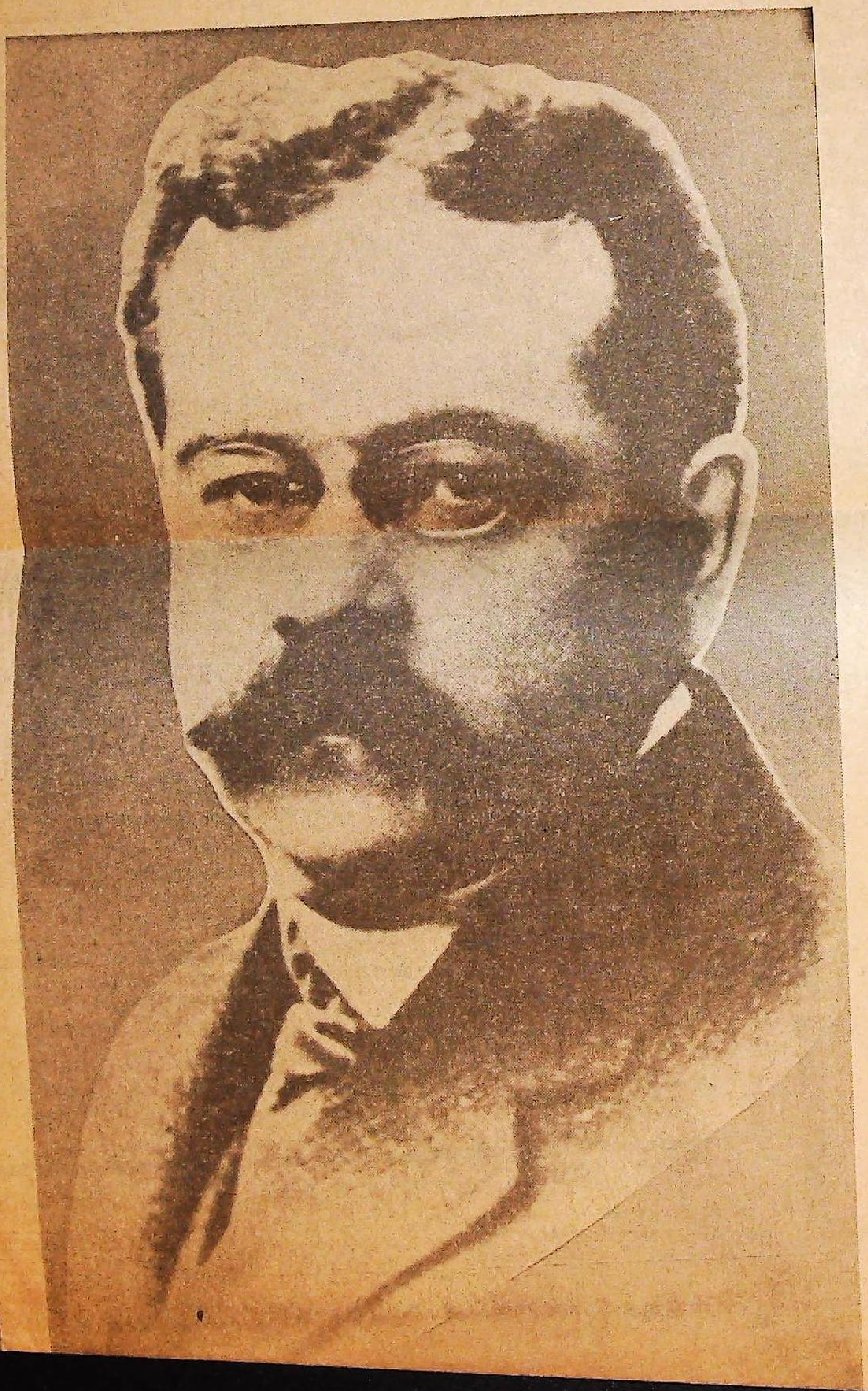

UFOs And the Followers Of Fort

By Emily Fisher

Charles Fort, solemn, gray and bespectacled, peers from a huge poster portrait pasted on the lectern. Programs distributed at the door describe him: "The man who invented the UFO question in 1919 and dealt with unknown aerial phenomena decades before the flying saucer was heard of." The association opening its second annual convention at the Shoreham Americana yesterday has taken his name, The International Fortean Organization.

"The ESP Reader," "Magic Into Science," "In the Wake of the Sea Serpents," "Human Animals," "Sex Songs of the Ancient Latts," "True Irish Ghost Stories"—those are a few of the hundreds of books lining the walls at the back of the convention hall, bespeaking the Forteans' investigative business: "UFOs, sea monsters, ghosts, lights on brown mountains, abominable snowmen, the Loch Ness Monster. We are interested in everything the public ignores as real because it can't rationally account for it," says Margaret Moam, associate editor of the Psychic Observer.

The Fortean organization, founded in 1965 and boasting about 1,500 members—scientists, several Catholic priests, housewives, even Nobel Prize-winner Linus Pauling—explores what established science ignores. They see themselves not as spiritualists, but as "skeptics of established science," says Ron Willis, the convention's organizer.

Empiricists all, they study what modern science scoffs at as supersti-

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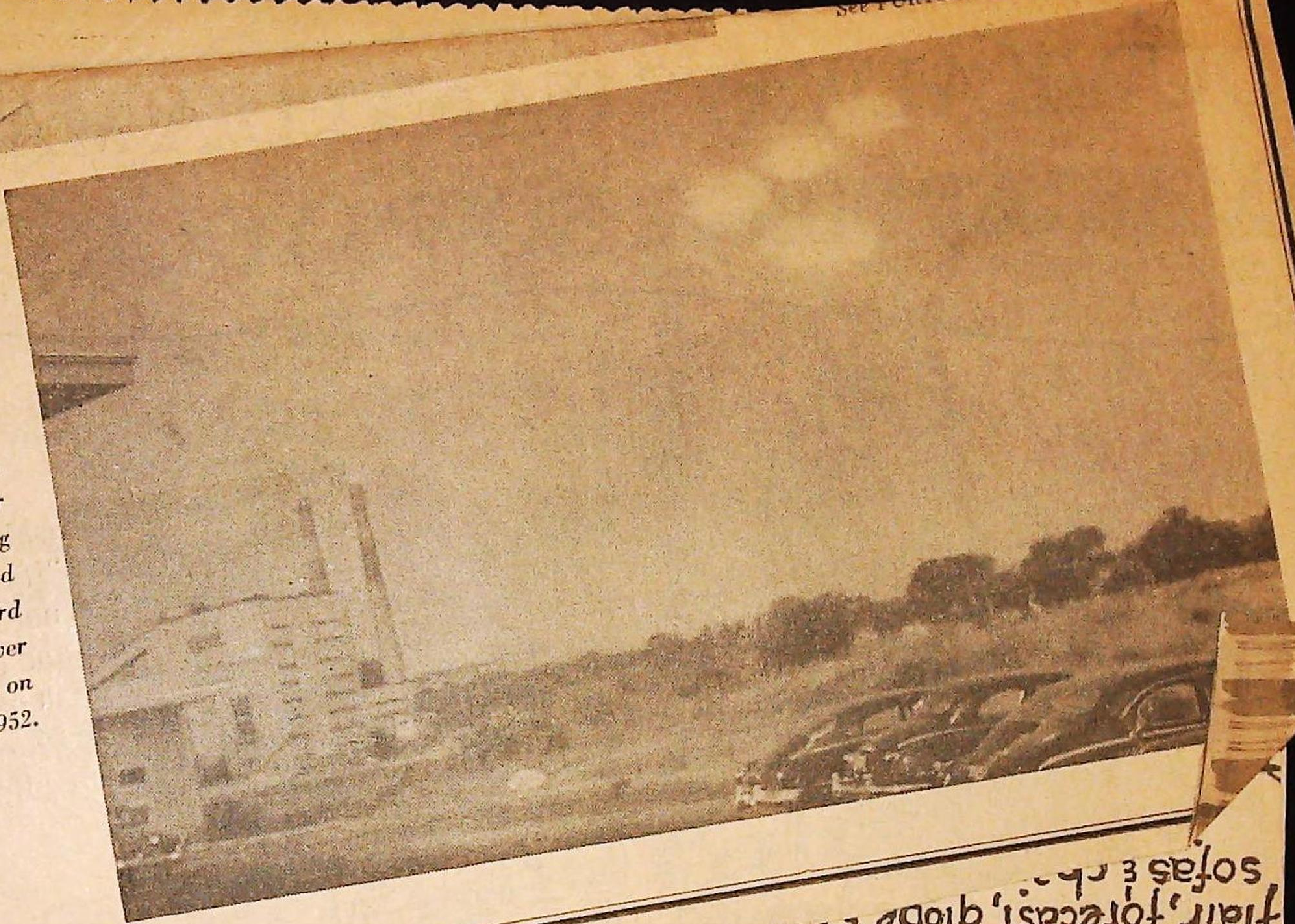

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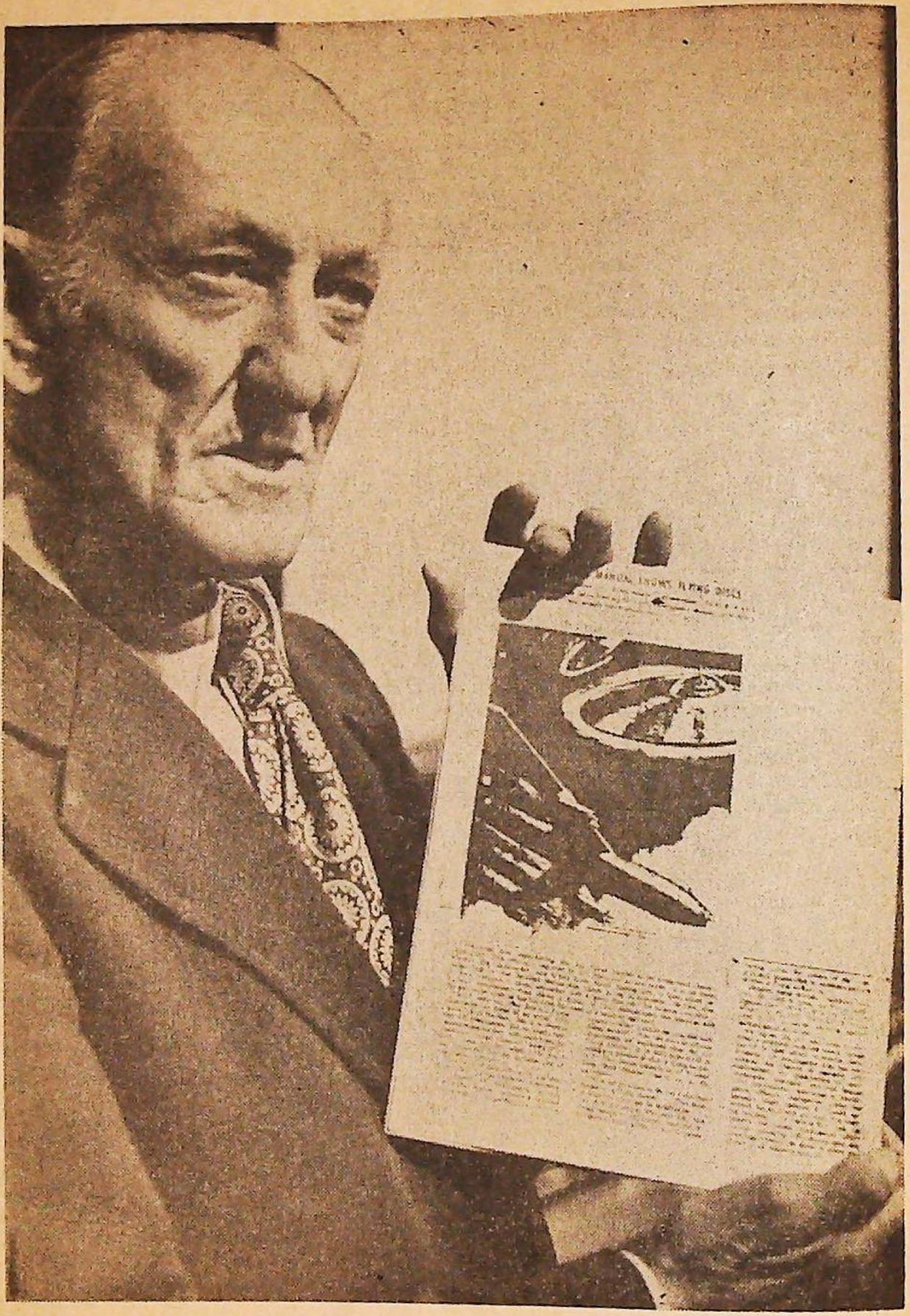

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Ghostly doings lure 150 here to bask in twilight zone

By Peggy Constantine

Things that go bump in the night are the Forteans' delight.

Forteans carry on the work of the late American journalist Charles Fort, collector of data on unexplained phenomena such as ghosts, ghost lights and psychic events. But they also like unexplained footprints, the Loch Ness monster, UFOs, and poltergeists (spirits).

Forteans dislike only scientific dogma.

About 150 Forteans, from a worldwide membership of 1,500, are holding their third annual Fortfest Friday through Sunday in the Sheraton-Oakbrook Hotel. They are discussing monsters, Nazi flying saucers, a giant octopus found on a Florida beach in 1896, ghosts and witches.

On Saturday night, Chicagoan Richard Crow will take them on a bus tour of Chicago's diagonal avenues. Those avenues, such as Archer, Ogden and Milwaukee, Crow said Friday, were built over Indian trails in the early 1800s. He said all sorts of strange things occur on them, from visitations by friendly ghosts to hideous murders.

If the Forteans are fortunate, Crow said, Resurrection Mary, the ghost of an 18-year-old girl who died in the 1930s and is buried in Resurrection Cemetery, will try to hitch a ride on the Forteans' bus.

Mary, Crow said, is the Chicago version of a U.S. folktale.

According to the story, a young man in an auto stops to pick up a beautiful young girl he finds hitchhiking. She gives him her address — in this case a home on Archer Av. — and he takes her there, but before he does, he asks for a date that weekend. She agrees.

The next Friday, the young man drives to the house and asks the girl's mother whether "Mary" is ready for her date.

"Mary?" the woman replies. "Mary has been dead for three years. She had an argument with her boy friend and asked to be let out of his car so she could hitchhike home. While she was hitchhiking a car hit and killed her. Every year on the anniversary of her death, her ghost stands at that same spot and hitches a ride home."

There are also Jewish, Italian and Mexican girl ghosts who hitchhike, Crow added.

The Forteans say they are philosophers. They are open to curiosity about anything that happens in the world.

Paul Willis, 33, of Arlington, Va., is president of the International Fortean Organization (INFO) and chairman of the weekend Fortfest. He said the group is open to anyone who has intellectual interest in "phenomena that fall outside accepted theories of behavior of the universe."

Robert Rickard, 30, traveled from Berk[illegible] England, for the weekend meeting. He said, "Being a Fortean can be spooky." But he doesn't think of it that way. "You have to be curious and have a sense of humor to be a Fortean," he said.

More than most people, Forteans are open to observation of anything. That is why they do not like scientists. "Scientists," said Rickard, "take a narrow view of the universe and dismiss everything else to prove their theories.

"Whenever we find pompous certitude in scientific research, we love to deflate it."

He said the group is not labeled oddball or weird. "Nobody really knows us well enough to label us," he said.

Willis and Rickard said they personally had not witnessed an example of unexplainable phenomena. They said they would like to see a poltergeist move something. But if Resurrection Mary hitches a ride Saturay, they'd like that, too.

conflict.

Kennebec Journal
Augusta Maine Sat
p4
Dec 10
1977

William M. Clark

Amazing Charles Fort

He was one of the most enlightened men of our century. He was also one of the most maligned. His admirers were fervent. His scorners were so bitter that their eyes glazed when his name was mentioned.

His name was Charles Fort. He knew there were visitors from space among us long before anyone saw, or at least reported seeing, a flying saucer. He was the first man to suspect that the spiritualists might be reversedly right; that there is a spirit world but that it is right here, that when spirits die, they become human beings.

I can neither remember nor narrate all of Charles Fort's beautiful observations and philosophies. There are enough of them to motivate the purchase of a mechanical head scratcher. There are flickering lights enough in them to give scientists fits.

One charming instance of Fort's lack of positiveness was his attitude on evolution. He said his mind was wide open, that perhaps apes and humans do have a common ancestry or that perhaps men were set down as men, on this planet by aliens or by gods.

But he also offered for debate the thought that, ages ago, some smart humans saw the way the race was developing and decided to cultivate less murderous, less industrious, more carefree characteristics. After much effort, they thus succeeded in becoming apes.

Fort spent most of his life searching old and current newspapers for reports of unexplained events. He collected stories of obvious poltergeist activities, of casual levitations, of young girls who seemed to be involuntary sources of "fire waves."

In "fire wave" stories he was particularly interested. He collected them from the most reputable of newspapers. They had definite similarities. Curtains or rugs or beds or tables would burst into flame when there was no discernable source of fire in the house but when some young girl was in residence or visiting.

One such case, in Toronto, was checked by police, by scientists, by clergymen, and by a professional "magician." Each time the little girl entered the afflicted house, fires started either on the wallpaper or on the bare floor.

The "experts" watched the girl very carefully during each of these trials. She made no discernible movements. The experts gave up. One of them admitted that, even if the girl had found some way of flicking matches without being seen, she could have flicked them at walls for 5 years without their setting wallpaper on fire.

The final story given to the paper by a police detective was that the fires had been started, without doubt, by a "half-witted" girl who had a "profound" knowledge of chemistry.

Fort said the detective either forgot that he had called the girl "half-witted" or else was quite sophisticated enough to know there was no inconsistency between scientific knowledge and imbecility.

The Charles Fort concept I like best is his statement that tyranny will never die as long as people honor chivalrous intent; every tyrannical gang in history having been given power because of its avowed intention to protect somebody against something, a la Galahad.

That does explain, doesn't it, our tolerance of the Naderites, OSHA, the Consumer Products Safety Commission, and the anti-nuclear mob at Seabrook that claims to be protecting us by assuming the tyrannical powers involved in minority decisions on safety?

There's no question but what it explains Joe McCarthy and James Hoffa.

UFO FORTFEST

Exploring Science's Borderlands

By Mark Grisar
Special to the Star-News

Mary, a hitchhiker, thumbs a ride to her home — a permanent residence in Chicago's Resurrection Cemetery.

Three Air Force jet fighters chase an unidentified flying object in the sky, and the planes and pilots are never seen again.

A priest, explaining his approach to reports of "demonic possession," describes himself as a "devil's advocate."

These are just a few of the stories being told at Fortfest, a three-day convention of UFO buffs who are exploring the borderlands of science at the Shoreham-Americana Hotel this weekend.

HELEN TULLUS, 60, of Baltimore, described how she "saw" her mother one afternoon when her mother was "slipping away" on her death bed. Not only was the mother 3 miles away in a hospital at the time, but Mrs. Tullus herself was blind.

With a seeing-eye dog at her feet, Mrs. Tullus recounted other unexplained experiences, including her premonition of the Lindbergh kidnaping several days before it occurred.

"I don't know how or why it happened," she said, "and I'm certainly not a psychic. In fact, my interest in the Fortean Organization began only after my husband began reading to me from one of Fort's books."

THE INTERNATIONAL Fortean Organization (INFO), which is sponsoring the convention, takes its name from Charles Fort. In 1919, he became one of the first to collect data on events that scientists dismissed as supernatural hogwash.

"I am a collector of notes upon subjects that have diversity," Fort wrote. "Such as . . . a reported growth of hair on the bald head of a mummy." Not all the anecdotes at today's Fortfest were quite so intriguing, but they did capture the imagination of some 60 Fortean enthusiasts.

Speaking before the searching visage in a portrait of Charles Fort, retired Marine Maj. Donald E. Keyhoe described the veiled secrecy of the Air Force whenever one of its pilots reports a UFO sighting.

"THE AIR FORCE won't let pilots talk to anyone about UFOs," Keyhoe said. He added that the Air Force fabricates its explanations of UFOs to keep the public from becoming alarmed.

Keyhoe said informed Pentagon sources told him the CIA is part of the conspiracy to suppress UFO information. "The public should know about this," he said.

There were more than 750 UFO sightings last year, according to Keyhoe, and a total of 150,000 reports in the United States since Charles Fort began keeping records of them. A recent Gallup Poll, Keyhoe said, showed that 51 percent of the American public believes UFOs are real.

ANOTHER FORTEAN, a bus driver who asked to remain unidentified, traveled from Canada to attend the conference. He described his status in the field of unidentified phenomena as "amateur meddler."

"The biggest problem with unexplained happenings is that they don't follow any pattern," he said. "There's no real way to test their appearance after the initial sighting."

The International Fortean Organization was founded by Ronald Willis and his brother Paul in 1965. "We do it because other groups have concentrated solely on UFOs. We're interested in all of the strange things that are going on in the world," Ronald Willis said.

The organization has 1,500 members. "We don't attract 'nuts,'" Willis said. "Most of our people are level-headed and inquisitive."

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TIME WARP · November '89

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